

the netting was intended for the investigation of the fish fauna. Later, on a closer examination of the turtle on its ventral side, some parasites, subsequently identified as *Argulus indicus* Weber, were observed at the basal portion of the anterior pair of appendages and attached to the skin of the plastron. The fact that these parasites make use of the aquatic turtles as hosts is not unexpected, though so far unrecorded.

Argulus indicus Weber has been previously recorded in India from *Ophicephalus punctatus* Bloch by Ramakrishna (1951) and from *Ophicephalus (Chana) gachua* H.B. by the author in 1958.

The genus *Argulus* though primarily ectoparasites of fishes are also found on other aquatic vertebrates. An American species *A. americanus* has been reported from the Salamander *Pseudobranchius striatus axanthus* and a tadpole of the frog *Rana heckscheri* Wright by Goin & Ogren (1956).

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15. ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE LEECH *OZOBRANCHUS BRANCHIATUS* (MENZIES 1791) (HIRUDINEA) IN INDIA (GULF OF KUTCH)

(With three text-figures)

Ozobranchus shipleyi Harding 1927, *O. papillatus* Kaburaki 1921, and *O. polybranchus* Sanjeeva Raj 1954 are the only three species of genus *Ozobranchus* recorded from India so far.

On 2 October 1962 the authors collected a few specimens of *Ozobranchus* from the plastron of a live turtle on the coast of Piroton

Island, Gulf of Kutch. Fifteen preserved specimens were studied and identified as *Ozobranchus branchiatus* (Menzies). Earlier records of this species are from the tropical Pacific, Flanders, Australia, and Florida (Raj 1954). This is the first record from India.

The live specimens were creamy white in colour. The length of the specimens studied varies from 5 to 11 mm.; the maximum width of the body (excluding the gill) is 4 mm. The body is divisible into an anterior narrow part, the neck, and a posterior broad abdomen. Somites one to three are represented by the first two rings (Text-fig. 1). The succeeding twenty-three somites, from the fourth to the

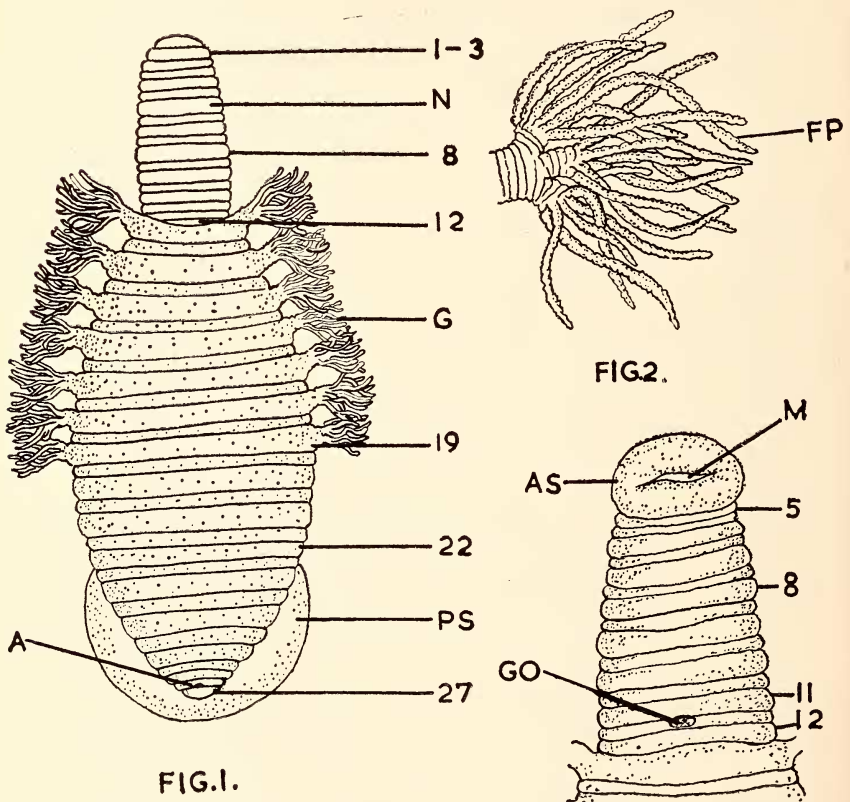


FIG.1.

FIG.2.

FIG.3.

Fig. 1. Entire specimen *Ozobranchus branchiatus* $\times c. 8$; Fig. 2. A single gill; Fig. 3. *O. branchiatus*: anterior region (ventral view)

A. anus; AS. anterior sucker; FP. finger-like process; G. gill; GO. genital opening; M. mouth; N. neck; PS. posterior sucker. The numbers denote the somites.

twenty-sixth, are bi-annulate, the anterior ring being wider. The twenty-seventh somite is uni-annulate. In all the specimens the eyes are not visible externally. The anterior sucker (Text-fig. 3) is not prominent; it carries the mouth and is directed ventrally. The posterior sucker (Text-fig. 1, PS) is large and as wide as width of the body. There are seven pairs of gills on the anterior seven abdominal somites, the larger ring of the somite bearing the gill. Each gill (Text-fig. 2) is divided into two to three branches bearing finger-like processes. The number of these finger-like processes in each gill varies from thirteen to twenty-one in a single specimen. It is observed that the finger-like processes are more in number in the anterior gills. The remaining eight somites of the abdomen are without gills.

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[The turtle from which the specimens reported were collected was released and its identity is not certain. This species of leech has so far been recorded only from *Chelonia mydas* (Linn.), the Green Turtle.—EDS.]

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